

ANNUAL REPORT

SEPTEMBER 2010 ~ 2011

Conservation In Jefferson County

Since 1946, Jefferson County has been providing assistance to landowners to protect our soil and water quality. In 1982, the County officially established the Jefferson County Land and Water Conservation Department. The department has been charged with administering State Statutes and County ordinances all leading to the conservation and protection of our natural resources. We are pleased to provide you with our 2009~2010 annual report. Anyone wishing further information on any of our programs is welcome to stop in or call for more details.

Jefferson County Land and Water Conservation Department
Courthouse
320 South Main Street
Room 113
920-674-7110 Phone 920-674-7114 Fax
Hours of Business
Monday ~ Friday 7:30 a.m. ~ 4:30 p.m.

Working Lands Initiative; The First Year



The new Working Lands Initiative was created to provide greater tax relief for farm owners while offering more protection to diminishing agricultural land and enhancing protection of the soil and waters of our State.

Land Conservation Staff have been actively working to transition landowners into the new program.

While WLI is similar to the old Farmland Preservation Program in many ways, there are some key changes: most notably being the calculation of the tax credit itself. The old Farmland Preservation

Program used a formula based on income and property tax to calculate the credit. Under WLI, the credit is a straight per \$7.50 per acre credit for counties with exclusive agricultural zoning.

For many landowners, this credit will be an increase over the former calculation that statewide, averaged around \$3.50 per acre. However, some landowner have seen a reduction in their credit.

Other changes include, no minimum acreage requirement and new conservation compliance obligations such as manure management and having and following a nutrient management plan.

The LWCD, working with UW-Extension and DATCP held training sessions in December 2010 and July 2011 to teach landowners how to write their own nutrient management plans. More sessions are slated for the winter.

State Statute now requires that Status Reviews of each participant's farm be done once every four years as opposed to every six. The 2011 growing season marked the start of a revamped status review system.

While the new WLI will provide enhanced protection for our soil and water resources, the workload will prove to be a challenge with limited staff.

Jefferson County Land and Water Conservation Committee

Michael Burow, Chairman
Greg Torres, Vice Chairman
Walt Christensen, Secretary
Carlton Zentner, Member
Scott Zimmerman, FSA Rep

Jefferson County Land and Water Conservation Department



Pictured left to right:

Nancy Lannert, Resource Conservationist
Mark Watkins Director
Patricia Cicero, Water Resources Mgmt. Specialist
Beth Klotz, Administrative Clerk
Gerry Kokkonen, GIS/Land Use Specialist
Joseph Strupp, Resource Conservationist
Paige Peterson, Student Intern (not pictured)



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Farmland Preservation (FPP) and Working Lands Initiative (WLI)

The Farmland Preservation is a program where landowners in exclusive agricultural zoning can qualify for a tax credit. The credit is part of their filing of Wisconsin State Income Tax. Land enrolled in FPP must be covered by an approved soil and water conservation plan. Starting in 2010, the FPP program has been included as part of the State's new Working Lands Initiative. The Jefferson County Land and Water Conservation Department has been working with County landowners to transition into the new program. The following is a list of activities for 2010/2011:

- Managed 940 conservation plans covering 140,216 acres,
- Assisted 19 new participants become eligible for the tax credit under WLI,
- Processed 61 notices of non-compliance or non-participation,
- Completed 280 on-farm status reviews for compliance with the new WLI requirements,
- Implemented a new late fee for Annual Certification,
- Completed 84 evaluations of livestock facilities on farms for compliance with the new WLI requirements,
- Held two training classes with Jefferson County UWEX and DATCP for farmers teaching them to write their own nutrient management plans.

Soil Conservation

Part of the mission of the Jefferson County Land and Water Conservation Department is to insure that farmland remains productive for generations to come. Through cooperative partnering with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Farm Service Agency, the LWCD works with Jefferson County producers to recommend and install Best Management Practices that will control soil loss and improve water quality. The Land and Water Conservation Department:



- Conducts an Annual Transect Survey to determine trends in cropping and soil loss. This year's survey, conducted June 8~13, 2011, shows that 85% of fields surveyed were at or below tolerable soil loss, down two percent from 2010. The average soil loss in Jefferson County was 2.3 tons per acre per year. Approximately 13% of the land was farmed using no-till methods and 56% was minimum tilled. Less than one percent was conventional tilled (moldboard plowed). The remaining ground was not tilled as it was either no longer being farmed or in a conserving use cover such as Conservation Reserve Land or hay.
- Develops contracts for Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, a State/Federal and County partnership. Contracts for 13 stream buffer projects were developed.
- Provide technical assistance to NRCS for Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). Through a contribution agreement, LWCD staff determines eligibility of land for CRP. Additionally staff designs and lays out practices such as contour and riparian buffers and develops contracts and maintenance plans.

Land and Water Conservation Committee Member Change

Representation from the Farm Service Agency's County Committee on the Land and Water Conservation Committee is required under State Statute. Karen Christian has been the LWCC representative for the last four years. Her term on the FSA County Committee has expired and we welcome Scott Zimmerman in her stead. Scott is in the second year of this three year FSA term. He and his family dairy farm in Milford Township. Welcome Scott!



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Water Conservation

Maintaining and enhancing ground and surface water quality is critical to the health, safety and recreation of residents and visitors of Jefferson County. The following are water quality and water conservation activities the Department has engaged in:

- Presented in conjunction with WDNR and the Rock Lake Improvement Association, an aquatic plant and algae workshop,
- Cooperatively with the Lower Spring Lake District, Army Corp of Engineers and the DNR, performed pre and post chemical treatment surveys of the aquatic plants in Lower Spring Lake,
- Four shoreland habitat restorations were installed and two Shoreland erosion control projects were completed on Rock Lake, Lake Ripley, the Rock River and on one of its tributaries,
- Assisted the Zoning Department with shoreland-related issues,
- Assistance was provided to various landowners and associations. Assistance ranged from help with grant applications to advice on shoreland habitat restoration and erosion control,
- Completed lake management plans for Hope and Mud Lakes,
- Assisted the Rome Pond Improvement Association complete an aquatic plant management plan for Rome Pond,
- Assisted the Rock River Coalition with citizen training on mussel monitoring in local streams,
- Participated in a lake cleanup and garlic mustard pull in conjunction with the Rock Lake Improvement Association.

Grants and Budgets

Much of the funding for the Jefferson County Land and Water Conservation Department comes from the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP). The Department actively looks for outside sources of revenue to reduce the amount of County Levy dollars requested.



- Applied for and received operational grants from the DATCP totaling \$155,000,
- Entered into a contribution agreement to complete CRP contracts with NRCS for approximately \$7,000,
- WLWCA grant funding to hire a student intern was discontinued,
- The Certification fee for FPP with an associated late fee helps to offset the cost of mailings and database maintenance. Approximately \$4,500 in revenue continues to be generated by this fee,
- Received \$20,000 in Land and Water Resource Management cost sharing dollars from DATCP,
- Received \$8,000 in State Grant funding from DATCP for nutrient management cost sharing,
- Generated \$8,400 in gross revenue from the Annual Tree and Shrub sale,
- County Farm Lease was awarded in 2011. It will expire in October 2013.

Information and Education Activities

- Published and distributed over 2,100 issues of *Conservation Counts*, dealing primarily with the new Working Lands Initiative,
- Prepared a Departmental display for the Jefferson County Fair,
- Participated in the Annual 4th Grade Farm Day giving presentations to over 800 students and their teachers,
- Partnering with NRCS, and FSA to hold the a Rural Landowner Conference in October, 2011.

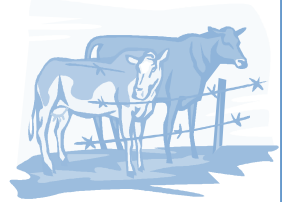
Congratulations to Gerry Kokkonen! Gerry received the Local Government Achievement Award at the 2011 Wisconsin Land Information Association conference for land records modernization.

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Nutrient Management and Livestock

Under State Statute NR151, agricultural producers are required to follow conservation performance standards. These rules regulate manure management and require the use of soil conservation and nutrient management plans by all producers. Additionally under State Statute and County Ordinance, livestock producers wishing to start or expand a herd of over 150 animal units (one animal unit equals 1,000 pounds of animal weight) must apply for a Livestock Siting Conditional Use Permit. The Department works cooperatively with the Zoning Department on these permits.



If livestock producers are not expanding their animal numbers but are building, modifying or abandoning manure storage facilities, the Department requires a permit under the County Manure Storage Ordinance. For the 2010 ~2011 report year, the Department:

- Issued two permits for closure of manure storage facilities under the County Manure Storage Ordinance.
- Cost shared with 2 landowners for proper closure of unused manure storage facilities.
- Cost shared with 1 landowner for nutrient management planning on 300 acres with an additional 180 acre contract pending,
- Investigated 14 manure management related complaints with corrective action taken as needed.
- Reviewed one Livestock Siting Permit application and provided information to the Zoning Department on compliance.

Geographic Information and Cartography

- Developed restriction maps for nutrient management plans covering over 3,200 acres on 28 farms.
- Utilized current FPP tracking database system to compile a county wide parcel dataset,
- Configured a GIS data viewer for hosting of the NR151 tracking tool,
- Provided mapping and data compilation for all PACE and Agricultural Enterprise Area applications.

Wildlife and Habitat

The Land and Water Conservation Department engages in the following activities to enhance wildlife habitat:

- For the 2009/2010 program year, 8,000 trees/shrubs were sold through the Annual Sale. Ten species were offered through the sale which starts in the fall of each year. New this year were two shrubs; Hazelnut and Serviceberry.
- Coordinate the rental of tree planters and sprayers with the DNR Foresters.
- Assists the DNR with the Wildlife Damage and Abatement Program that reimburses crop producers for damages caused by deer, geese and turkey.
- Continues to work with the DNR on the Gypsy Moth Suppression Program.

Non-Metallic Mining

To operate a non-metallic mine (sand, gravel, stone and topsoil) for commercial extraction, quarry owners must apply for a Non-Metallic Mining permit. Part of the permit process is the submission of a reclamation plan detailing how the land will be re-stored when the quarry is no longer in use. During the report year:

- There are a total of 27 permitted sites in the County with five showing moderate expansion,
- Two new mining locations serving the STH 26 bypass have become permitted and have NR135 reclamation plans,
- Three sites totaling nearly 70 acres are approaching full reclamation and one three-acre site has been fully reclaimed.

Other Activities

- Supervise maintenance of the Jefferson County Potters Field,
- Established electronic tracking for NR151 requirements,
- Mediated the resolution of additional access issues on the County Farm with the Department of Transportation due to the construction of the Highway 26 by-pass,
- Added the ability to accept credit card payments.
- Department Director continued participation in County Advisory Committee with NRCS and FSA.
- Contracted with Jefferson County Highway Department for graveled access to the Potter's Field to prevent ongoing flood damage the grass lane.

Volunteer Intern

In July 2011, the Department welcomed Paige Peterson of Elkhorn, Wisconsin as an unpaid intern, working in exchange for the on-the-job experience. A few words from Paige...

As a recent Graduate from UW-Whitewater, with a B.S. in Environmental Geography, I am very excited to be able to work with such a knowledgeable and fun group of professionals in the Jefferson County LWCD. Learning more about the current conservation practices, regulation and technologies are just a few of the opportunities I have had in this short period of time. The opportunity to assist in a field of study that truly has a purpose for conserving our natural resources as well as educating others is very rewarding. I look forward to future projects within the Department.

Looking Ahead to 2012

With the sweeping changes in the State Budget made by the new Governor, the Department faces challenges in implementing State programming. As ever, the Department will strive to meet the concerns of the citizens of Jefferson County and protect our soil and water resources.

Future Goals and Activities ~

- *Offer additional training sessions for farmers to write their own nutrient management plans,*
- *Hold additional workshops to educate landowners on Working Lands Initiative conservation requirements,*
- *Explore new sources of revenue,*
- *Establish an electronic tracking system for Working Lands Initiative compliance,*
- *Add more features to the Department's web site,*
- *Monitor developments in the spread of the Emerald Ash Borer,*
- *Monitor new developments in manure management,*
- *Serve on State-wide panel for the Livestock Siting Law update,*
- *Serve on Rock River Recovery Agriculture Sector Team.*

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Partnering Agencies and Contacts

The Jefferson County Land and Water Conservation Department works cooperatively with a number of State and Federal Agencies. The following is a list of agencies and contacts:

~Federal~

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| Farm Service Agency (FSA) | Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) | United States Department of Agriculture |
| Debra Schut, Executive Director 134 West Rockwell Street Jefferson WI 53549 920-674-2020 ext. 107 | Dennis Vollmer, Dist. Conservationist 134 West Rockwell Street Jefferson WI 53549 920-674-2020, ext. 104 | Animal Damage Abatement Program David Terrell 1-800-433-0663 |

~State~

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| <i>DNR Foresters</i> Nick Koltz (South half Jefferson Co.) 2514 Morse Street Janesville WI 53546 608-743-4830 Randy Stampfl (North half Jefferson Co.) N7725 Hwy 28 Horicon WI 53032 920-387-7884 | <i>DNR Conservation Wardens</i> Ryan Ellifson (South half Jefferson Co.) 920-674-5880 David Walz (North half Jefferson Co.) 920-262-9508 <i>DATCP</i> Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection Bureau of Land and Water Resources Kathy Pielsticker, Director PO Box 8911 Madison WI 53708-8911 |
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~Working Lands Initiative Contacts~

State Web site: <http://workinglands.wi.gov>
State Email: DATCPWorkingLands@Wisconsin.gov
Jefferson County WLI Hotline: 920-674-8776
Jefferson County Email: Workinglandsinfo@jeffersoncountywi.gov

Out of the long list of nature's gifts to man, none is perhaps so utterly essential to human life as soil.

Hugh Hammond Bennett, The Father of Soil Conservation
From *Soil Conservation*, McGraw Hill Book Co. 1939